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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

8 April 1968

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Vietnam Rally Ends in Riot in Belgrade

A mass rally in Belgrade on 6 April to demonstrate solidarity with the people of Vietnam ended with police using truncheons and water hoses to prevent the crowd from attacking the USIA reading room. The rally, one of the largest since the Vietnam war widened four years ago, was addressed by party presidium member Veljko Vlahovic.

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COMMENT: The crowd, estimated by Yugoslav authorities to have reached 300,000, probably was more stirred by the death of Martin Luther King than by opposition to US policy in Vietnam. The rally caused the Yugoslav government to postpone for two weeks the visit of the Sixth Fleet flagship to Dubrovnik.

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Albania Steps-Up Its Anti-Religious Campaign

Churches and mosques are being torn down in the wake of Albania's anti-religious campaign, according to an article in the February issue of the French publication Est et Ouest. Those religious buildings razed will be converted to secular uses, such as museums, restaurants, and maternity centers. In addition, the article states that regime efforts to erase all traces of religion now include the renaming of towns bearing the names of saints.

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EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC
DOWNGRADING AND DECLASSIFICATION

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Belgrade Tightens Restrictions on Albanian Emigres

Due to increased Yugoslav pressure for Albanian refugees to assimilate or leave the country, the number of Albanians coming to Italy from Yugoslavia increased more than five fold from 1966 to 1967.

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COMMENT: Yugoslavia's sensitivity over the question of national minorities probably explains--at least in part--the increased pressure on Albanian emigres. There are already between 900,000 and 1,000,000 Albanians in Yugoslavia--most of whom are unskilled and make up a large part of the country's high number of unemployed workers. The Yugoslav economy cannot absorb much of an influx. The Tito regime may also hope that Tirana will look upon the tightening of restrictions on Albanian refugees as a gesture of good will.

The Roman Catholic Church in Slovenia is Criticized

The Catholic Church in Slovenia has been warned to keep out of political affairs by the Slovenian branch of the regime's mass organization, the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia, according to a press report from Belgrade. The church is accused of using modern American methods, such as the blessing of automobiles by priests, to attract young people. In addition, the church is criticized for setting up kindergartens, giving scholarships to secondary school pupils, and for organizing seminars for future teachers.

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COMMENT: To date, this is the strongest statement by Communist authorities against broadened church activity since the Vatican-Belgrade agreement of 1966. Apparently the party is concerned over the potential appeal of Catholicism for the country's youth, especially in view of the younger generation's apathy for the communist party.

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US-Yugoslav Agreement on Manufacture of Computers

Arrangements have been made to manufacture and market US computers in Yugoslavia, according to an article in the 27 December issue of Electronic Weekly. the firm of Iskra of Kranj will manufacture "peripherals" and assemble the computers for the Control Data Corporation of Minneapolis.

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COMMENT: American investments in Yugoslavia have increased since last July, when Belgrade relaxed its laws governing foreign investors. To date however, US-Yugoslav agreements have concentrated on consumer goods and this is the first arrangement concerning the manufacture of more sophisticated equipment.

Results of East German Constitutional Referendum

Despite indications of substantial opposition to the new East German draft constitution there were only scattered incidents and no evidence of organized dissent.

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COMMENT: According to the East German news service, the figures were 11,536,265 for and 409,329 against the draft constitution. Even though the referendum stands as an example of maximum intimidation of the populace by the East European regime, the party feels it has been successful in impressing various foreign visitors that the referendum was being held democratically. This, of course, was the underlying purpose of the referendum and will be trumpeted by the GDR propaganda machine, as liberal reforms take place in some of the other Eastern European countries.

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